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NIO # 367-74

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Office of the Director of Central Intelligence

SP - 23/74
4 March 1974

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Need for Interagency Politico-Strategic Analysis

1. The National Intelligence Officer for Strategic Programs, with the advice and consent of an interagency working group, has developed and issued a program of seven projects to be completed in the period February-July 1974. All of these projects concern technical problems relating to Soviet strategic programs, such as missile accuracies, capabilities and employment of the Backfire bomber, and Soviet laser research.

2. This program reflects too narrow an interpretation of projects suitable for the NIO/SP to address. It excludes a wide range of politico-strategic questions which are both important and relevant to the policymaker. The eagerness of senior officials for Intelligence to consider broad politico-strategic questions is evident in the requirements levied on Intelligence in NSDM 242 and NSSM 191. The fact that the NIO/SP has been assigned primary responsibility for these actions suggests the propriety and suitability of the NIO/SP taking the initiative on other politico-strategic topics.

3. There are several studies in this field which should be initiated by the NIO/SP. Three examples are cited below. In the first instance, the project is already underway as a single agency effort. It is cited as an example of a policy-relevant, long overdue study which probably now will emerge too late to have maximum impact.

a. The Chinese Factor in Soviet Strategic Planning. Chinese strategic capabilities are looming increasingly large in Soviet strategic calculations. The Soviets clearly consider that the Chinese threat puts special demands on their strategic force

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posture and this calculation probably is a significant input to the Soviets' approach to SALT limitations. A study of the "China factor" would address, in part, such questions as: the strategic lessons of the 1969 incidents on the Ussuri and subsequent Soviet nuclear threats leveled at the Chinese; the precise nature of the Soviet Union's China problem in terms of strategic force requirements and targeting; Soviet uncertainties vis-a-vis Chinese present and potential strategic capabilities and behavior; Soviet actions thus far to accommodate the Chinese strategic threat; the Soviet concept of deterrent "sufficiency" against China; and how these considerations influence Soviet calculations and policy in SALT. Such a study has obvious relevance in the area of strategic arms limitations.

b. Present and Near-term Soviet Capabilities to Engage in Limited Nuclear Options. This problem is being addressed in a limited way in the response to NSDM 242, but it could stand on its own as an important study intimately related to current US policy. Intelligence can make a timely contribution in this area. Such a project could include a review of strategic offensive and defensive forces and their capabilities for limited nuclear war. Soviet attack assessment capabilities would be addressed as would intelligence resources, command, control, and communications, central decision-making organs and capabilities, and civil defense.

c. Soviet Perceptions of the US Strategic Threat. Objective, evidence-oriented analysis of this question is long overdue, perhaps because of its potential political sensitivity. There is probably no more crucial politico-strategic question for Intelligence to consider as the Soviets stand on the verge of deploying new ICBMs and SLBMs and of making other major improvements in their strategic forces; as the US prepares to develop and deploy B-1, Trident, and to make its own strategic force and employment changes; and as both sides weight SALT limits--past, near-term and future. Based on military writings, force structure and exercises, employment doctrine, and clandestine or special intelligence, such a project would try to develop a comprehensive

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picture of real-world Soviet perceptions of the US strategic threat--in terms of doctrine, forces and intentions. Such a study would provide an essential data base for making better informed judgments about Soviet intentions (as addressed, for example, in SNIE 11-4-73).

4. The projects lend themselves to interagency work. In fact, the second is being addressed already by an interagency task force, albeit in rudimentary fashion. There are certainly other questions of this nature that should be considered. I recommend that serious thought be given to incorporating projects (b) and (c) noted above and perhaps others into the post-July 1974 Strategic Programs production plan. The CIA Strategic Evaluation Center, in conjunction with the Office of Political Research, is a logical source of ideas, as are State/INR and Politico-Military Affairs, and DIA's Directorate of Estimates.

5. Important problems will be left untouched if the NIO/SP interprets its mandate too narrowly and focuses only on hardware issues. Broader questions are waiting to be addressed and NIO/SP, in cooperation with NIO/USSR, should take the initiative.



Assistant to the
National Intelligence Officer
for Strategic Programs

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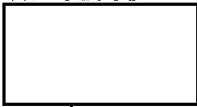
| - R. Gates

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